

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present response, claims 8-11 will remain pending in the application. Claim 8 will be amended, and claims 1-7 and 12 will be cancelled. Entry of the present response, reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the pending application in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-6 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Nagase (U.S. Patent No. 7,046,293), and rejected claims 3, 7 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagase in view of Kondo (U.S. Patent No. 5,600,521).

Applicant has cancelled claims 1-7 and 12, merely to advance prosecution of the present application to issue. Thus, the cancellation of claims 1-7 and 12 should not be taken as an acquiescence to the propriety of the rejection.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 12 as being dependent upon rejected claim 8, but indicated that this claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 12 includes allowable subject matter. In response to the Examiner's reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter, Applicant wishes to clarify the record with respect to the basis for the patentability of claims in the present application. In this regard, while Applicant does not disagree with the Examiner's indication of allowability, Applicant submits that each of the claims in the present application recite a combination of features, and that the basis for patentability of each of these claims is based on the combination of features recited therein.

Applicant has amended claim 8 to include the subject matter of claim 12. For at least this reason, Applicant submits that claim 8 is in condition for allowance, and requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e).

Applicant submits that claims 9-11 are also in condition for allowance, in view of their dependency from claim 8.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant recognizes that the current status of the present application is after-Final. However, Applicant respectfully submits that entry of the present response is proper under the current circumstances, as the present response does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration by the Examiner. Rather, the amendments made herein merely incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 12 into independent claim 8.

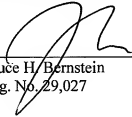
Entry of the present response, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and believed to be appropriate. Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present invention in condition for allowance and believes that he has done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, including any extensions of time required to place the application in condition for allowance by an Examiner's Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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